

# NEW MOTOR RACING SEASON TO BE GREATEST IN AUTO HISTORY

Plans Are Outlined By Officials of A. A. A. Contest Board; Elgin Road Race May Be Resumed While There Is Possibility of Daytona Again Putting Up Straightaways.

SUCCESS of the 1916 automobile racing season was established beyond all question of doubt when the contest board of the American Automobile Association held its dinner at the Chicago Automobile club, and officially awarded the 1916 championship to Dario Resta, together with a beautiful diamond studded platinum fob, a gift from the contest board, the Bosch trophy, \$5000 of the B. F. Goodrich company's cash prize and \$2000 of the Bosch cash award. Aiken and Rickenbacker, who finished the season second and third, received \$3000 and \$2000 of the Goodrich cash prize and \$1500 and \$500 of the Bosch cash prize, respectively.

This marked the official ending of the most successful season that automobile racing has ever had and reflected great credit upon the contest board of the A. A. A. Contributing to this success were speed records that totally eclipsed the imagination of the drivers themselves. There have been made possible not entirely through the construction of the big fast speedways, but also to the advancements in the mechanical construction of the racing cars and the development of cord tires,

with the Vanderbilt cup race in 1916, but it was not until 1916, that an American driver, and an American car, Robertson in a Locomobile, won this big motor classic.

The American Grand Prix race took place on the motor calendar in 1916, but only in 1914, when Eddie Pullen finished first with a Mercer, has any American car ever won this race.

At the beginning of the war, the famous European road races were forsaken, for 1914 witnessed the last run of the French Grand Prix. The 48 Gordon Bennett cup classic had been abandoned, however, in 1906.

Elgin Race Given Up. Here in America, the Elgin road race, which had its first run in 1910, was discontinued with the event of 1915. The Chicago Automobile club cup race, which had been run in connection with the Elgin races during 1912, 1914 and 1915, was likewise discontinued at the same time the Elgin event was given up.

Probably the drivers are somewhat responsible for the fact that road racing has practically been abandoned, for the speedways have opened greater opportunities to them. It must be seen, however, that the very salvation of the sport itself lies within the efforts of those who can bring back the road race as a diversion from the speedway events which will soon become too commonplace.

A. A. A. Wants Road Race. It is to be hoped that the sentiment of the contest board of the A. A. A. expressed by David Beecroft at the recent Chicago dinner, will be realized before many weeks have passed, for this board is not alone in its desire to have the Elgin road race resumed this year. Mr. Beecroft, in his review of the sport since the contest board of the A. A. A. was organized, spoke at length upon the importance of road racing in general and the Elgin event in particular as being a necessary feature in not only maintaining the present interest, but in the growth and development of the Elgin road race were present when Mr. Beecroft made this talk and doubtless efforts are already under way to have Elgin return to the 1917 racing calendar.

Drivers vs. Speedways. The past year has developed the fact that the drivers need concern themselves about little except their motors and the speedways, principally the latter. This has been brought out more prominently by Dario Resta's experience during the 1916 season, which demonstrated that tires have reached the stage where they afford the safety of but little, if any, trouble. In a recent interview he said: "A few years ago it was a question of how many tires would need for a race, but during the past year it seems to be rather how many races one set of Silvertown tires will stand."

But the drivers have to contend seriously with the speedways. On some of the newer speedways last year, the number of serious accidents have been the cause of suggested regulations for 1917 that will practically eliminate the old dangers. The most important suggestion is that a committee representing the contest board of the A. A. A. and the drivers make a personal inspection of each course before a sanction is granted, and further, to make the use of the sanction dependent entirely upon the correction of any dangers that this committee may have found, before the start of the race. There would be a space of 30 days between the inspection and the race, doubtless this would insure the safety of the drivers as well as the spectators.

The stringent regulations of the contest board coupled with the advances made by the manufacturers in motor car construction, have already reduced the possibility of accidents, so far as the cars are concerned, to the very minimum. Improvements in the construction of the cars for 1917 will add still more to this great factor of safety.

There is no speedway where accidents did occur in 1916 that has not taken steps to remove the old dangers.

What the Speedways Are. The speedways of America have carefully nourished motor racing during the past six years, and have been the means of developing and holding the universal interest that had been previously acquired. The frankness of James Allison, one of the owners of the Indianapolis speedway, and the Presto-Lite company, in discussing the speedway question at the A. A. A. dinner in Chicago, is to be much admired. He pointed out the accidents during 1916, he felt that like everything else of any magnitude, the speedways had to have their beginning and again he said: "These accidents were not entirely due to the speedways, but in most cases, serious accidents. These accidents may be attributed to many causes, but it is certain that the speedways are correcting their defects as quickly as they are discovered. At Indianapolis, the management is taking time by the forelock and these who attend the races there this year will find a number of improvements that further insure the safety of the drivers as well as the public."

One of the most commendable portions of Mr. Allison's talk was when he referred to the hotel conditions of previous years at Indianapolis. Those who have attended the races there remember that hotel tariffs were increased to unreasonable proportions during the racing season. But Mr. Allison has been the cause of remedying this for he threatened, and needless to say, would have made good, to take the 1917 race away from Indianapolis and run them on other speedways unless the hotel management would be satisfied with their regular charges during the time when so many people flock to the Indianapolis races. When the hotel men acceded to his request, the most serious obstacle that has confronted the Speedway management was removed.

Return to 200 Mile Race. Mr. Allison also stated that this year Indianapolis would return to its original policy and race a 200 mile race. Decoration day, May 30. The total cash prizes will be \$50,000, in accordance with the regulations of the A. A. A., which require an average of \$100 per mile for such events.

That the cash receipts of the Indianapolis speedway have not been all profit, developed when it was learned that out of every dollar of net profit, fully eighty cents has been expended in safeguards and improvements.

What About Daytona? Should the A. A. A. be successful in reviving road racing, as it is seriously hoped it will be, probably Daytona and Jacksonville will contribute their support in the straightaway events. It must be remembered that the last straightaway records were made by Louis Vichow and the late Bob Harman on these courses in 1911. Since that time, these records have never been equaled because no other course has the distinct advantages for high speed straightaway work. If these Florida cities do return to the racing calendar, we can look for a complete shattering of every record that has ever been made.

The speedway events already announced for 1917 have been divided into two classes, as follows, one class being set aside for the winners of the 1917 Championship points in addition to the usual cash prizes and the other for cash prizes alone.

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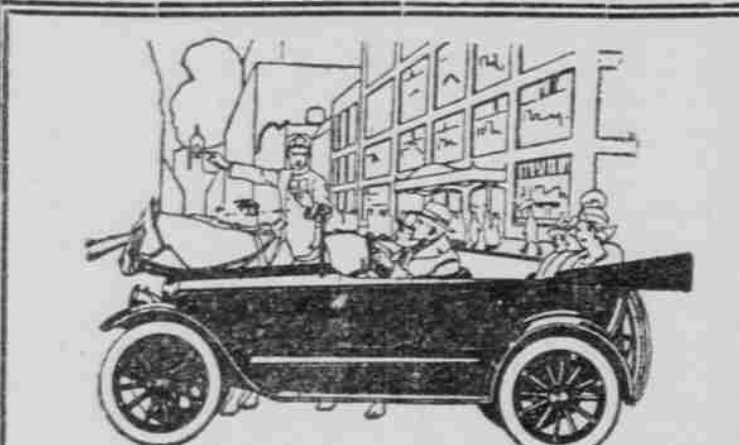
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